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The Secretaries of the Department of the Interior

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How many Secretaries of the Interior have there been since the creation of the Department in 1849? Who were they, where were they born, and how long did they serve?

These questions and more are answered in this brief, informative document. In it you will discover which Secretary served the longest, who was foreign born, and under which President each Secretary served.

It is hoped that this brochure will stimulate your curiosity about the Department of the Interior as well as answer questions regarding the Secretaries of the Interior.

In Memory of John Richardson Sword
May 24, 1939 — August 5, 1986

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1. Thomas Ewing

Born: December 28, 1789, West Liberty, Ohio County, Virginia (now West Virginia)

Appointed from: Ohio

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: March 8, 1849

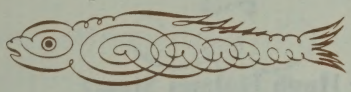
Served under: Presidents Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore

Termination: July 22, 1850

Length of Service: 1 year, 4 months, 15 days

Died: October 26, 1871

Buried: St. Mary's Cemetery, Lancaster, Ohio



James Alfred Pearce's name appears on a plaque as having served as Secretary of the Interior. However, since he did not take the oath of office, he never became Secretary.

Born: December 8, 1804, Alexandria, Virginia

Appointed from: Maryland

Nominated: July 20, 1850

Confirmed: July 20, 1850

Died: December 20, 1862

Buried: New Chester Cemetery, Chestertown, Maryland

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2. Thomas McKeak Thompson McKennan

Born: December 31, 1794, New Castle, Delaware

Appointed from: Pennsylvania

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: August 15, 1850

Served under: President Millard Fillmore

Termination: August 26, 1850

Length of Service: 12 days

Died: July 9, 1852

Buried: Washington Cemetery, Washington, Pennsylvania

3. Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart

Born: April 2, 1807, Staunton, Virginia

Appointed from: Virginia

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: September 12, 1850

Served under: Presidents Millard Fillmore and Franklin Pierce

Termination: March 7, 1853

Length of Service: 2 years, 5 months, 26 days

Died: February 13, 1891

Buried: Thornrose Cemetery, Staunton, Virginia

4. Robert McClelland

Born: August 1, 1807, Greencastle, Franklin County, Pennsylvania

Appointed from: Michigan

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: March 8, 1853

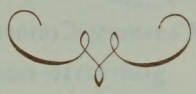
Served under: Presidents Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan

Termination: March 9, 1857

Length of Service: 4 years, 2 days

Died: August 30, 1880

Buried: Elwood Cemetery, Detroit, Michigan



5. Jacob Thompson

Born: May 15, 1810, Leasburg, Caswell County, North Carolina

Appointed from: Mississippi

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: March 10, 1857

Served under: President James Buchanan

Termination: January 8, 1861

Length of Service: 3 years, 9 months, 29 days

Died: March 24, 1885

Buried: Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis, Tennessee

(**Moses Kelly, Chief Clerk,** was appointed Acting Secretary until a Secretary could be regularly appointed.)

6. Caleb Blood Smith

Born: April 16, 1808, Boston, Massachusetts

Appointed from: Indiana

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: March 5, 1861

Served under: President Abraham Lincoln

Termination: December 31, 1862

Length of Service: 1 year, 9 months, 26 days

Died: January 7, 1864

Buried: City Cemetery, Connersville, Indiana

7. John Palmer Usher

Born: January 9, 1816, Brookfield, Madison County, New York

Appointed from: Indiana

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: January 1, 1863

Served under: Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson

Termination: May 15, 1865

Length of Service: 2 years, 4 months, 15 days

Died: April 13, 1889, at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Buried: Unknown

8. James Harlan

Born: August 26, 1820, Clark County, Illinois

Appointed from: Iowa

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: May 16, 1865

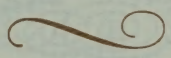
Served under: President Andrew Johnson

Termination: August 31, 1866

Length of Service: 1 year, 3 months, 15 days

Died: October 5, 1899

Buried: Forest Home Cemetery, Henry County, Iowa



9. Orville Hickman Browning

Born: February 10, 1806, Cynthiana, Harrison County, Kentucky

Appointed from: Illinois

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: September 1, 1866

Served under: Presidents Andrew Johnson and Ulysses S. Grant

Termination: March 4, 1869

Length of Service: 2 years, 6 months, 4 days

Died: August 10, 1881

Buried: Woodland Cemetery, Quincy, Illinois

10. Jacob Dolson Cox

Born: October 27, 1828, Montreal, Canada

Appointed from: Ohio

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: March 5, 1869

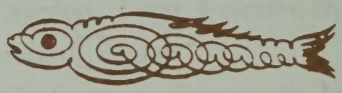
Served under: President Ulysses S. Grant

Termination: October 31, 1870

Length of Service: 1 year, 7 months, 26 days

Died: August 8, 1900

Buried: Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio



11. Columbus Delano

Born: June 5, 1809, Shoreham, Vermont

Appointed from: Ohio

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: November 1, 1870

Served under: President Ulysses S. Grant

Termination: September 30, 1875

Length of Service: 4 years, 11 months

Died: October 23, 1896

Buried: Mt. View Cemetery, Mt. Vernon, Ohio

12. Zachariah Chandler

Born: December 10, 1813, Bedford, New Hampshire

Appointed from: Michigan

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: October 19, 1875

Served under: Presidents Ulysses S. Grant and Rutherford B. Hayes

Termination: March 11, 1877

Length of Service: 1 year, 4 months, 23 days

Died: November 1, 1879

Buried: Unknown

13. Carl Schurz

Born: March 2, 1829, Liblar, near Cologne, Germany

Appointed from: Missouri

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: March 12, 1877

Served under: Presidents Rutherford B. Hayes and James A. Garfield

Termination: March 7, 1881

Length of Service: 3 years, 11 months, 26 days

Died: May 14, 1906

Buried: Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Tarrytown, New York

14. Samuel Jordan Kirkwood

Born: December 20, 1813, Harford County, Maryland

Appointed from: Iowa

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: March 8, 1881

Served under: Presidents James A. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur

Termination: April 17, 1882

Length of Service: 1 year, 1 month, 9 days

Died: September 1, 1894

Buried: Oakland Cemetery, Iowa City, Iowa

15. Henry Moore Teller

Born: May 23, 1830, Granger, Allegany County, New York

Appointed from: Colorado

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: April 18, 1882

Served under: President Chester A. Arthur

Termination: March 3, 1885

Length of Service: 2 years, 10 months, 16 days

Died: February 23, 1914

Buried: Fairmount Cemetery, Denver, Colorado

16. Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar

Born: September 17, 1825, Eatonton, Putnam County, Georgia

Appointed from: Mississippi

Nominated: Unknown

Confirmed: Unknown

Took Office: March 6, 1885

Served under: President Grover Cleveland

Termination: January 10, 1888

Length of Service: 2 years, 10 months, 5 days

Died: January 23, 1893

Buried: St. Peter's Cemetery, Oxford, Mississippi

17. William Freeman Vilas

Born: July 9, 1840, Chelsea, Orange County, Vermont

Appointed from: Wisconsin

Nominated: December 12, 1887

Confirmed: January 10, 1888

Took Office: January 16, 1888

Served under: Presidents Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison

Termination: March 6, 1889

Length of Service: 1 year, 1 month, 21 days

Died: August 28, 1908

Buried: Forest Hill Cemetery, Madison, Wisconsin

18. John Willock Noble

Born: October 26, 1831, Lancaster, Ohio

Appointed from: Missouri

Nominated: March 5, 1889

Confirmed: March 5, 1889

Took Office: March 7, 1889

Served under: Presidents Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison

Termination: March 6, 1893

Length of Service: 4 years

Died: March 22, 1912, St. Louis, Missouri

Buried: Unknown

19. Michael Hoke Smith

Born: September 2, 1855, Newton, Catawba County, North Carolina

Appointed from: Georgia

Nominated: March 6, 1893

Confirmed: March 6, 1893

Took Office: March 6, 1893

Served under: President Grover Cleveland

Termination: September 1, 1896

Length of Service: 3 years, 5 months, 26 days

Died: November 22, 1931

Buried: Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta, Georgia

20. David Rowland Francis

Born: October 1, 1850, Richmond, Kentucky

Appointed from: Missouri

Nominated: December 9, 1896

Confirmed: January 18, 1897

Took Office: September 3, 1896

Served under: Presidents Grover Cleveland and William McKinley

Termination: March 5, 1897

Length of Service: 6 months, 3 days

Died: January 15, 1927

Buried: Unknown

21. Cornelius Newton Bliss

Born: January 26, 1833, Fall River, Massachusetts

Appointed from: New York

Nominated: March 5, 1897

Confirmed: March 5, 1897

Took Office: March 6, 1897

Served under: President William McKinley

Termination: February 19, 1899

Length of Service: 1 year, 11 months, 14 days

Died: October 9, 1911

Buried: Unknown

22. Ethan Allen Hitchcock

Born: September 19, 1835, Mobile, Alabama

Appointed from: Missouri

Nominated: December 21, 1898

Confirmed: December 21, 1898

Took Office: February 20, 1899

Served under: Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt

Termination: March 4, 1907

Length of Service: 8 years, 15 days

Died: April 9, 1909

Buried: Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis, Missouri

23. James Rudolph Garfield

Born: October 17, 1865, Hiram, Ohio

Appointed from: Ohio

Nominated: December 3, 1906

Confirmed: January 15, 1907

Took Office: March 5, 1907

Served under: Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William H. Taft

Termination: March 5, 1909

Length of Service: 2 years, 1 day

Died: March 24, 1950

Buried: Unknown

24. Richard Achilles Ballinger

Born: July 9, 1858, Boonesboro, Iowa

Appointed from: Washington

Nominated: March 5, 1909

Confirmed: March 5, 1909

Took Office: March 6, 1909

Served under: President William H. Taft

Termination: March 12, 1911

Length of Service: 2 years, 7 days

Died: June 6, 1922

Buried: Unknown

25. Walter Lowrie Fisher

Born: July 4, 1862, Wheeling Virginia (now West Virginia)

Appointed from: Illinois

Nominated: April 13, 1911

Confirmed: April 17, 1911

Took Office: March 13, 1911

Served under: Presidents William H. Taft and Woodrow Wilson

Termination: March 5, 1913

Length of Service: 1 year, 11 months, 23 days

Died: November 9, 1935

Buried: Unknown

26. Franklin Knight Lane

Born: July 15, 1864, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada

Appointed from: California

Nominated: March 5, 1913

Confirmed: March 5, 1913

Took Office: March 6, 1913

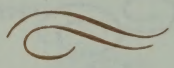
Served under: President Woodrow Wilson

Termination: February 29, 1920

Length of Service: 6 years, 11 months, 24 days

Died: May 18, 1921

Buried: Unknown



27. John Barton Payne

Born: January 26, 1855, Pruntytown, Virginia (now West Virginia)

Appointed from: Illinois

Nominated: February 14, 1920

Confirmed: February 28, 1920

Took Office: March 15, 1920

Served under: Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Warren G. Harding

Termination: March 4, 1921

Length of Service: 11 months, 20 days

Died: January 24, 1935

Buried: Unknown

28. Albert Bacon Fall

Born: November 26, 1861, Frankfort, Kentucky

Appointed from: New Mexico

Nominated: March 4, 1921

Confirmed: March 4, 1921

Took Office: March 5, 1921

Served under: President Warren G. Harding

Termination: March 4, 1923

Length of Service: 2 years

Died: November 30, 1944

Buried: Evergreen Cemetery, Three Rivers, New Mexico

29. Hubert Work

Born: July 3, 1860, Marion Center, Indiana County, Pennsylvania

Appointed from: Colorado

Nominated: February 27, 1923

Confirmed: February 27, 1923

Took Office: March 5, 1923

Served under: Presidents Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge

Termination: July 24, 1928

Length of Service: 5 years, 4 months, 20 days

Died: December 14, 1942

Buried: Unknown

30. Roy Owen West

Born: October 27, 1868, Georgetown, Illinois

Appointed from: Illinois

Nominated: December 6, 1928

Confirmed: July 20, 1928

Took Office: July 25, 1928

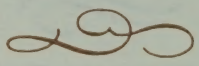
Served under: Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert C. Hoover

Termination: March 4, 1929

Length of Service: 7 months, 10 days

Died: November 29, 1958

Buried: Rosehill Cemetery, Chicago, Illinois



31. Ray Lyman Wilbur

Born: April 13, 1875, Boonesboro, Iowa

Appointed from: California

Nominated: March 5, 1929

Confirmed: March 5, 1929

Took Office: March 5, 1929

Served under: Presidents Herbert C. Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt

Termination: March 4, 1933

Length of Service: 4 years

Died: June 26, 1949

Buried: Unknown

32. Harold LeClair Ickes

Born: March 15, 1874, Frankstown Township, Blair County, Pennsylvania

Appointed from: Illinois

Nominated: March 4, 1933

Confirmed: March 4, 1933

Took Office: March 4, 1933

Served under: Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman

Termination: February 15, 1946

Length of Service: 12 years, 11 months, 12 days

Died: February 3, 1952

Buried: Sandy Springs, Maryland

33. Julius Albert Krug

Born: November 23, 1907, Madison, Wisconsin

Appointed from: Wisconsin

Nominated: February 26, 1946

Confirmed: March 5, 1946

Took Office: March 18, 1946

Served under: President Harry S. Truman

Termination: December 1, 1949

Length of Service: 3 years, 8 months, 14 days

Died: March 26, 1970

Buried: Arlington National Cemetery

34. Oscar Littleton Chapman

Born: October 22, 1896, Omega, Halifax County, Virginia

Appointed from: Colorado

Nominated: January 5, 1950

Confirmed: January 18, 1950

Took Office: December 1, 1949

Served under: President Harry S. Truman

Termination: January 20, 1953

Length of Service: 3 years, 1 month, 20 days

Died: February 8, 1978

Buried: Arlington National Cemetery

35. James Douglas McKay

Born: June 24, 1893, Portland, Oregon

Appointed from: Oregon

Nominated: January 20, 1953

Confirmed: January 21, 1953

Took Office: January 21, 1953

Served under: President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Termination: April 15, 1956

Length of Service: 3 years, 2 months, 25 days

Died: July 22, 1959

Buried: Bellcrest Memorial Cemetery, Salem, Oregon

36. Fred Andrew Seaton

Born: December 11, 1909, Washington, D.C.

Appointed from: Nebraska

Nominated: May 28, 1956

Confirmed: June 5, 1956

Took Office: June 8, 1956

Served under: President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Termination: January 20, 1961

Length of Service: 4 years, 7 months, 13 days

Died: January 16, 1974

Buried: Parkview Cemetery, Hastings, Nebraska

37. Stewart Lee Udall

Born: January 31, 1920, St. Johns, Arizona

Appointed from: Arizona

Nominated: January 21, 1961

Confirmed: January 21, 1961

Took Office: January 21, 1961

Served under: Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson

Termination: January 20, 1969

Length of Service: 8 years

Died:

Buried:

38. Walter J. Hickel

Born: August 18, 1919, Ellinwood, Kansas

Appointed from: Alaska

Nominated: December 11, 1968

Confirmed: January 23, 1969

Took Office: January 24, 1969

Served under: President Richard M. Nixon

Termination: November 25, 1970

Length of Service: 1 year, 10 months, 2 days

Died:

Buried:

39. Rogers Clark Ballard Morton

Born: September 19, 1914, Louisville, Kentucky

Appointed from: Maryland

Nominated: January 25, 1971

Confirmed: January 28 1971

Took Office: January 29, 1971

Served under: Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford

Termination: April 30, 1975

Length of Service: 4 years, 3 months, 2 days

Died: April 19, 1979

Buried: Wye Church Churchyard, Talbot County, Maryland

40. Stanley K. Hathaway

Born: July 19, 1924, Osceola, Nebraska

Appointed from: Wyoming

Nominated: April 4, 1974

Confirmed: June 11, 1975

Took Office: June 12, 1975

Served under: President Gerald R. Ford

Termination: October 9, 1975

Length of Service: 3 months, 26 days

Died:

Buried:

41. Thomas S. Kleppe

Born: July 1, 1919, Kintyre, North Dakota

Appointed from: North Dakota

Nominated: September 9, 1975

Confirmed: October 9, 1975

Took Office: October 17, 1975

Served under: President Gerald R. Ford

Termination: January 20, 1977

Length of Service: 1 year, 3 months, 4 days

Died:

Buried:

42. Cecil D. Andrus

Born: August 25, 1931, Hood River, Oregon

Appointed from: Idaho

Nominated: December 18, 1976

Confirmed: January 20, 1977

Took Office: January 23, 1977

Served under: President Jimmy Carter

Termination: January 20, 1981

Length of Service: 3 years, 11 months, 28 days

Died:

Buried:

43. James G. Watt

Born: January 31, 1938, Lusk, Wyoming

Appointed from: Colorado

Nominated: January 20, 1981

Confirmed: January 22, 1981

Took Office: January 23, 1981

Served under: President Ronald Reagan

Termination: November 8, 1983

Length of Service: 2 years, 9 months, 16 days

Died:

Buried:

44. William Patrick Clark

Born: October 23, 1931, Oxnard, California

Appointed from: California

Nominated: October 13, 1983

Confirmed: November 18, 1983

Took Office: November 18, 1983

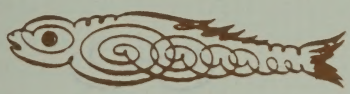
Served under: President Ronald Reagan

Termination: February 7, 1985

Length of Service: 1 year, 2 months, 20 days

Died:

Buried:



45. Donald Paul Hodel

Born: May 23, 1935, Portland, Oregon

Appointed from: Oregon

Nominated: January 10, 1985

Confirmed: February 6, 1985

Took Office: February 8, 1985

Served under: President Ronald Reagan

Termination:

Length of Service:

Died:

Buried:

46.

Born:

Appointed from:

Nominated:

Confirmed:

Took Office:

Served under:

Termination:

Length of Service:

Died:

Buried:

47.

Born:

Appointed from:

Nominated:

Confirmed:

Took Office:

Served under:

Termination:

Length of Service:

Died:

Buried:

48.

Born:

Appointed from:

Nominated:

Confirmed:

Took Office:

Served under:

Termination:

Length of Service:

Died:

Buried:

49.

Born:

Appointed from:

Nominated:

Confirmed:

Took Office:

Served under:

Termination:

Length of Service:

Died:

Buried:

50.

Born:

Appointed from:

Nominated:

Confirmed:

Took Office:

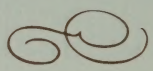
Served under:

Termination:

Length of Service:

Died:

Buried:



51.

Born:

Appointed from:

Nominated:

Confirmed:

Took Office:

Served under:

Termination:

Length of Service:

Died:

Buried:

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

Oldest Secretary upon taking office: Samuel J. Kirkwood was 67 when he took office.

Youngest Secretary upon taking office: Hoke Smith was 37 when he took office.

Secretaries foreign born: Jacob Dolson Cox, Canada; Carl Schurz, Germany; and Franklin Knight Lane, Canada.

President with the greatest number of Secretaries serving under him: Four Secretaries served under President U.S. Grant in his eight years as President. They were Orville H. Browning, Jacob D. Cox, Columbus Delano, and Zachariah Chandler.

Secretary with

Shortest Term: Thomas M.T. McKennan — 12 days

Longest Term: Harold L. Ickes — 12 years, 11 months, 12 days

Second Longest Term: Ethan Allen Hitchcock — 8 years, 15 days

Average Term: 3 years, 2 months, 19 days

Notes

Prepared by the Office of Administrative Services,
Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240
September, 1986